



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ATTORNEY GENERAL DARRELL MCGRAW SUES UNLICENSED CONTRACTORS IN THE KANAWHA VALLEY

Attorney General Darrell McGraw sued four Kanawha County contractors yesterday in the Circuit Court of Kanawha County. The four contractors are Appalachian Heating and Cooling, Inc. and its president LaRue Causey; M. L. Perry Heating and Cooling, Inc. and its president Jodie Perry; Hess Roofing Company, Inc. and its president Ella Jane Hess; and Timothy M. Romeo and Terry W. Romeo d/b/a Arctic Air.

Last month, Attorney General McGraw launched an investigation into contractors that were advertising in the Verizon Yellow Pages that they were licensed, when they were not. The Consumer Protection Division scoured the yellow pages and obtained licensing information from the West Virginia Contractors' Licensing Board. At the conclusion of the investigation, McGraw's office determined that these four contractors were advertising that they were licensed, when indeed they were not. Although all four companies had a license in the past, their licenses expired long ago. Indeed, Arctic Air's license expired in 1995.

McGraw offers the following tips to consumers before hiring a contractor:

- Do not take the contractor's word that he has a valid contractor's license. Rather, check with the contractors' licensing board to determine whether the contractor has a valid contractor's license. The contractors' licensing board telephone number is 304-558-7890.
- Avoid door-to-door work crews, who often pose as contractors from another job with leftover materials, like gravel or roofing supplies.
- Avoid a contractor who drives an unmarked van or has out-of-state plates on his vehicle.
- Avoid a contractor who pressures you for an immediate decision.
- Avoid a contractor who offers you a discount for finding him other customers.
- Avoid a contractor who has workers or supplies who tell you they have had trouble getting paid.
- Avoid contractors who tell you that you have won a prize, but in order to get your prize you have to buy a home improvement product or service.
- Avoid contractors who are offering free inspections.
- Avoid a contractor who quotes a price that is too cheap.
- Proof of insurance. Make sure the contractor carries general liability insurance and worker's compensation.

- Ask the contractor for and check at least three references.
- Whenever possible, inspect the contractor's work.
- Verify the contractor's credentials (e.g., training and experience).
- Pay by check or credit card. If possible, avoid on the spot cash payments.

Consumers wanting to file a complaint against a contractor should call Attorney General McGraw's Consumer Protection Division hotline at 1-800-368-8808 or print a complaint form from this website.

To download and print a complaint form, please click on the *General Consumer Complaint Form* link at the top of this page.

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